

THE  
OBSERVATOR.

Of the War betwixt the Swedes and Muscovites: Remarks thereon; Of a Non-Fighting Story from Flanders, with Reflections.

From Saturday August the 25th, to Wednesday August the 29th, 1705.

*Obs.* NOW, Honest Country-man, for your t'other Fighting Story at Sea. You remember what you promis'd me the last time, don't you?

*Country-m.* Yes, Master, I remember the Story, but don't know what to make of it; 'tis an Out-Landish Story of the Swedes and Muscovites. It seems the Swedes, God prosper 'em, have Invaded the Czars Country by Sea, as the Czar has done their Country by Land. The Swedes have Fir'd with Cannon and Bombs upon a Castle in the Bay of Finland, and on the Czars Ships in that Harbour; and 'tis said That the Swedes have been twice repuls'd, but I hope ten't true.

*Obs.* Why so, Honest Country-man? Why hast thou such an Affection for the Swedes?

*Country-m.* I am sure I an't of the Swedes breed, and yet I Love that King of Sweden with all my Spirit. I wou'd have'n Beat the King of Poland, the Czar of Muscovy, and the Pope, and every Body. I Love a Prince that Fights for a Righteous Cause, that has Justice on his side, that is not the Aggressor in a War, but that Fights in Defence of his own Crown, the Lands, Liberties, and Estates of his People. Come, Master, one Bumper full of Prosperity to the King of Sweden, and then your Opinion concerning this Muscovite War.

*Obs.* I don't know what to say; should I speak the Truth, perhaps some Foreign Something may make Complaint against me, as once before.

*Country-m.* That's hard, Master, not speak of the Affairs at Home nor Abroad neither; never a poor Observator was ty'd up to such hard meat. Come, Master, don't fear the Czar, he's not in the Confederacy with England, and his Bears, and Wolves, and Tygers, and Lyons are a great way off, and can't bite you. Let Joan and I hear a little of this Emperor of Russia, and what he's a doing.

*Obs.* 'Tis thought that the Empire of Russia, in respect of its extent of Land, and the numbers of Natives, is the greatest Dominion, under the Government of a single Person, of any in the World; but as great Bodies are generally unweildy and unfit for Action, that great Empire has hitherto made little or no Figure in the World; but in Traffick, War and Policy has been Inferiour to many Petty-States.

This present Emperour, Peter Alexovitz, the Son of Michaelovitz, was Born in the Year 1670. and Succeeded his Eldest Brother Fedor Alexovitz, joyntly with his Elder Brother John, who Dying in the Year 94, the whole Administration of the Government devolv'd on the present Emperour.

He always seem'd to have a greater Soul, than usually inspir'd the Breasts of the Russian Emperours, and so much was he in Love with War, and Men of Arms, that one was his Daily Study,

and the others his Constant Companions; and he thought it not beneath him to make a Daughter of one of his chief Officers in the Army, Empress of Russia, by Marriage, in the Year 1688.

But he found his Court without Politicians, his Army without Officers skil'd in the Arts of War, and his Subjects Ignorant in Commerce and Traffick; he found how Potent other Nations, much Inferiour to his Dominions, were become only by their Policy in War and Traffick, he knew this was necessary to raise the Grandeur of his Empire. This he could not learn at Home, and therefore must seek that Knowledge Abroad.

This put him upon that unparallel'd Journey of his to Holland, England, and other Places; whoever thought this to be a meer Ramble of his; were as much in the Wrong as the Czar was in the Right; 'tis too much the Property of Englishmen to look no farther than the ends of their Noses; but methinks our Statemen might be farther Sighted. When the Czar was Complemented with a sham Fight off St. Hellens, might not an Englishman have wish'd that our Schollar might not learn so much as to grow in time full as Wise as his Masters and Instructors.

'Tis but common Prudence, in States and Kingdoms, to keep Potentates as Ignorant in the use of Arms as may be, especially for places whose Defence is Shipping, as is ours, to keep our Neighbours from a Naval Force. If 17 Years Taxes, paid for our Folly in helping France to a Fleet of Ships, will not make Englishmen consider, for ought I know 20 Years more may do it.

What the Czar learn'd in England he's putting in Execution in Russia, some could little have thought that in so short a time he would have rear'd such a Number of Ships of War, and I leave it to Wiser Heads, that stand upon higher Ground than my self to Judge, whether suffering so many of our best Artists and Navigators, as have lately gone to engage in the Czars Service, may not, in time, prove as fatal to England, as our sending Timber and Shipwrights to France in the Reign of Charles the Second has prov'd to us since the Revolution.

To maintain the Ballance of Europe is what we are now contending for; and this Ballance is to be maintain'd by keeping the Respective Powers In Equilibrio, so that one may not make Havock of, Destroy, Invade and Plunder his Neighbours. I think 'tis no crooked thought to consider and take heed, lest while we are pulling down a Prince, designing a Universal Monarchy in the South, we do not let another creep up with the same views in the North. Thus we shall have a continual Rotation of War, and the Intervals to Peace will be only a Breathing time, and so to War again.

The King of Sweden, a Young Prince, and of good

good Inclination to the *Common Cause*, was the only Barrier we had in view to an *Exorbitant Power* in the *North*, but him we saw Invaded, even in the Infancy of his Government, when his Reign was but a Span long, first by the King of *Poland*, after a most Barbarous and Treacherous manner, and now by the United Powers of *Poland* and *Muscovy*; so that the other hope of the *Protestant Interest* in the *North* is greatly Embarrass'd, if not in its Declension.

Let us in the next place consider what *England* may expect (I consider only the Interest of my own Country) from the growth of the *Russian Shipping* in point of Trade. 'Tis true, the *Czar*, when he was in *England*, Complemented us by allowing the Exportation of a certain Quantity of *Tobacco* to his Country, which he can at Pleasure again Prohibit, and is at present but an Advantage to some particular Persons, but none to the *Crown*, by Reason of the draw-Back.

And since he has so many of our Natives in his Service, that know the way to our Plantations in *America*, 'tis a thing worthy our Consideration, whether he may not, in time beat us out of part of that Trade; other Settlements may be procured that may afford those Commodities, and the *Northern Countries* may be supply'd nearer home than from *England*. 'Tis but his making Terms with the Duke of *Courland*, and the Family of *Poyntz* in *England*, and the Island of *Tobago* may be his own, and sufficient to supply the *North* with Commodities of the growth of *America*.

Not can we prevent him from the *European Trade* in the *Mediterranean*, the *African* or *East India Trade*. He that has Shipping, Men, and Money can command the Markets in all parts of the World, and when his Subjects have been Abroad and seen the Customs, Fashions, and Commerce of other Nations, they may grow ashamed of their present *Brutality*, and become *Civiliz'd*, vers'd in *Politics*, and a Match for those that now think themselves much their Superiours.

*Retrospection* and *Forefight* are the two great Hinges on which the Axis of *Policy* does turn; by looking backwards we may find what is to be amended; and by looking forward we may see what is to be prevented; the little *Ants* are our Instructors in this Case, who in Summer hoard up their Food and Fortifie their Habitations against the Extremities of Winter; they are mean *Politicians*, who only respect what is, and not what may or shall be: *Quid sit futurum cras fuge Quarere. Take no thought for to-morrow* is the Maxim of such who have parted with their Reason, and are abandon'd to *Inconsideration*.

I shan't play the *States-man* too far, and shall conclude this Head with Remark, That the *Czar* of *Muscovy* was Invaded by no Body, either by Sea or Land, at the time when he made such a great *Armament* by both; That we may Rationally imagine, that he Invaded *Livonia*, and the *Swedish Territories*, only to insure his Men to the use of *Arms*, and to weaken a Prince, whose Power was the greatest Bar to the *Projects* he had in view. — Now, *Country-man*, for your *Non-Fighting-Story*.

*Country-m.* 'Tis a short, but a sad one. Our Brave General, the Duke of *Marlborough*, came up fair with the *French Army*, and was just ready to give 'em a slap in the Chaps, and we should certain ha' had another *Hockstedt* bout of it; but 'tis said, the *Deputies* held his hands. What the *Devil* are those *Deputies*? We have so many cramp Names of Folks, that I shall never learn 'em, and so be confounded to the end of the Chapter.

*Obs.* Our *Queen* has but one *Deputy* in the *Army*, and that is the Duke of *Marlborough*, and I thank God he was for Fighting. No Honour lost to the *English Nation*, but much acquir'd in this Action. If one may call that an Action where there is nothing done; the Duke of *Marlborough* is sufficiently loaded with *Lavrets* already, so that we may conclude he did not desire Fighting out of a *Vain Glorious Humour* to acquire Fame; he has enough to live upon in *England*, and needs not go to *Flanders* to get his Bread; and certainly, nothing could oblige such a Person to venture so much, but the *Common Good* of *Europe*; and having done so much already, they might have trusted him once more, when 'twas so likely to be a *Finishing Stroke* to the *Power* of *France*.

His Grace, in all the Bloody Engagements he has been concerned in, never yet spar'd his own *Country-men*, he has led 'em into the greatest dangers; they have sustain'd the Heat and Fury of Battle, and let their *Trophies* in *Westminster-Hall* justifie for 'em, whether they have not been amongst the thickest of the *Enemies Troops*.

The *Deputies* of the *War*, which the *Dutch* send with their *Armies*, are a sort of *Unaccountable Officers*, they are *Fescues* to their *Generals*, and Teach 'em to Read the Lines of *War*. This is sending *Generals* into the *Field* that are in *Non-Age* in Point of *War*, and can't go Abroad without their *Guardians*. If these *Deputies* are capable of *Direction*, they are capable of *Command*, and fitter for *Generals*; for my part I can find no other use

of 'em, than that of a *Green-keeper*, who shows the Ground to the *Bowlers*, only with this difference, those that Lay their own Bet, may refuse the Ground that is given them, and take another; but here it seems the *Generals* must take the *Deputies* Ground, or not Bowl at all.

Be this matter how it will, certain it is the Duke of *Marlborough*, this Campaign, has lost two Advantages of Fighting: That on the *Moselle* I did not so much wonder at, when some People can have the *Gout* when they please, but I thought better things, and in *Flanders* I hop'd for better Success, better Measures could not have been taken, but why not Executed remains a *Riddle* with me, whatever it may do with others.

Whatever the *Politicians* of this Age, who have turned *States Policy* into meer *Trick* and *Legerdemain* of Parties, may think of it, 'tis my single Opinion, That the Command vested in one single Person, with the Advice of the *Generals* about him, who are to share the Fate of War, is most likely to Accomplish those great things we expect from our *Armies*, provided we can have an intire dependance on the *Courage*, *Conduct*, and *Integrity* of that single Person. I must confess I should not at first have thought it Advisable for the Duke of *Marlborough* to have had such a Command in the Infancy of his Services, but since he has given so many Eminent Proofs of his *Courage* and *Conduct*, and we fully see a Thread of *Fidelity* running thro' all his Actions, we can't trust one too much, on whom we can so well Relye, and who is every way so well Quality'd for such great Command.

*Country-m.* Well, Master, I have another Fighting Story from *Italy*, which I will give you as soon as I have the Particulars.

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